

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 05899 091642Z

71

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FBIE-00 SY-05 /051 W

----- 043727

R 091205Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7977

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

AMCONSUL TRIESTE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR CASC YO US (SEDMAK, MICHAEL)

REF: STATE 208783, BELGRADE 5537

1. CONOFF VISITED SEDMAK FOR OVER AN HOUR AT SREMSKA MITROVICA PRISON ON SEP 1. HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH APPEARED TO BE AS GOOD AS CAN BE EXPECTED FOR A 60-YEAR OLD MAN CONFINED TO PRISON. HE HAS A STANDING APPOINTMENT TO SEE PRISON DOCTOR ONCE A WEEK AND CAN REQUEST ADDITIONAL VISITS IF NECESSARY. HIS MAIN COMPLAINT IS PAIN IN SHOULDERS AND LEGS CAUSED BY ARTHRITIS (CONOFF TOOK HIM DARVON TABLETS WHICH HE USES FOR THE PAIN).

2. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS MENTAL HEALTH DOES NOT APPEAR TO CONOFF TO BE AS GOOD AS PHYSICAL HEALTH. HE APPEARS TO BE A VOLATILE AND EMOTIONAL PERSON AND ALMOST BROKE DOWN SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE VISIT. HE IS CONVINCED THAT HIS ONLY "CRIME" WAS TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE "WRONG PEOPLE", AND SAY HE KNOWS HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SURVIVE FIVE YEARS IN PRISON. AT ONE POINT HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO GO ON A HUNGER STRIKE TO FORCE "REPRESENTATIVES" OF PRESIDENTS TITO AND FORD TO CONVENE A SPECIAL REVIEW PANEL TO DECIDE HIS GUILT OR INNOCENCE. CONOFF STRESSED FORCEFULLY THAT IN HIS VIEW ONLY HOPE FOR AN EARLY RELEASE WOULD BE IS TO FOLLOW ATTORNEY'S
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PAGE 02 BELGRA 05899 091642Z

ADVICE REGARDING PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW.

3. SEDMAK'S THREAT OF HUNGER STRIKE DID NOT SEEM CREDIBLE AND HE READILY AGREED TO DO NOTHING RASH FOR PRESENT. ALTHOUGH HE FINALLY AGREED THAT CASES ARE DIFFERENT, HE INSISTED THAT HE IS AS INNOCENT AS TOTH AND THAT HE WAS FRAMED BY HIS "FRIEND" TOMIC.

4. SEDMAK GAVE HIS ORAL APPROVAL FOR EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT TO RELEASE "ANY AND ALL" INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON HIS CASE TO FAMILY MEMBERS, CONGRESSMEN, SENATORS AND "OTHERS WHO COULD HELP". CONOFF WAS UNABLE TO GET WRITTEN CONSENT BECAUSE OF PRISON REGULATIONS. EMBASSY WILL TRY AGAIN TO GET WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION THROUGH PROPER CHANNELS.

5. EMBASSY WILL CHECK WITH SEDMAK'S ATTORNEY TO SEE IF ANYTHING NEW RE PETITION FOR PARDON FILED WITH COURT IN APRIL.

6. RE PARAGRAPH TWO OF STATE 208783, CONSUL DISCUSSED MAIL SITUATION WITH PRISON OFFICIALS. OFFICIALS CLAIM THAT SEDMAK ALREADY GETTING PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT SINCE MAIL FROM TRIESTE RELATIVES AND FROM U.S. RELATIVES IS COMBINED INTO ONE LETTER EACH MONTH. OFFICIALS WOULD PERMIT DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS FROM U.S. RELATIVES BUT IF SEDMAK GOT LETTER FROM U.S., HE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED LETTER FROM TRIESTE AND VICE VERSA. IT WOULD SEEM THAT PRESENT ARRANGEMENT BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED. SEDMKA HAD NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE MAIL SITUATION.
SILBERMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MENTAL HEALTH, PRISONERS WELFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BELGRA05899
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760341-0540
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760979/aaaacpnz.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 208783, 76 BELGRADE 5537
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAY 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, CASC, YO, US, (SEDMAK, MICHAEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006